



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

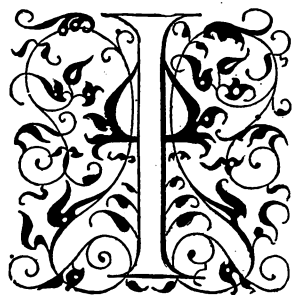
We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

# DECORATION & FURNITURE

## CERAMICS IN DECORATION.



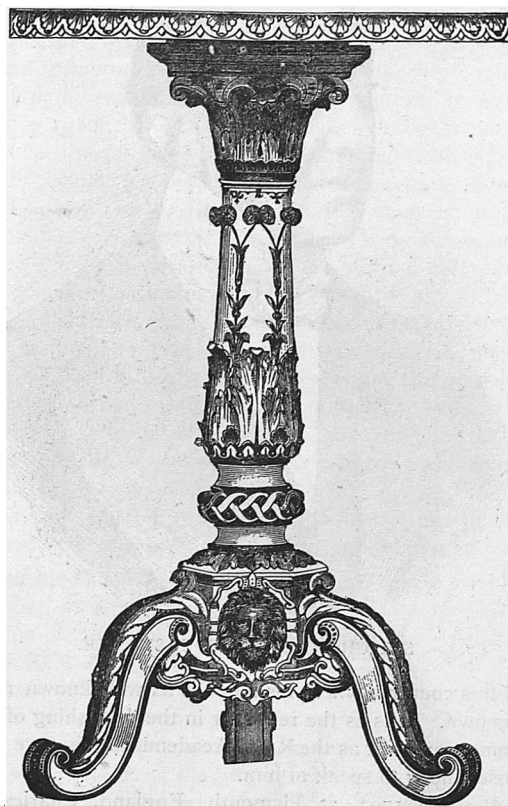
It is gratifying to notice that the opportunities for embellishment of small articles of furniture and objects of vertu afforded by the ceramic painting of the day are becoming more and more appreciated by our American manufacturers. Messrs. Mitchell, Vance & Co., who have given employment to many decorators in the production of their china-painted lamp-bodies, have intrusted some of our best china-painters with the decoration of large circular slabs for small fancy tea-tables. The idea is a good one, and doubtless will be adopted by other firms of the kind. Certainly, medallions and panels for inlaying furniture deserve more attention than they have hitherto received. Their dimensions might be restricted to the largest size in which they can be produced in one piece without having to be joined in the manner of tiles, as joints in ceramic painting always mar, and often destroy, the artistic effect of the work. Smaller medallions and plaques could be applied to blotting books, envelope boxes, stationery and card cases, postage scales, book-slides, door-plates, or inlaid in the tops of walking-sticks, umbrella and sunshade handles, of smelling-bottles and door-handles. Originality in design, invention and combination of subjects and ornament, have a far wider scope on articles which are more or less associated with our daily pursuits than on ornamental plaques, which are only fit for wall decoration. Of course, the idea of porcelain table-tops is not new in itself, for long before amateur china-painting was introduced into this country, the importation from the Orient of such slabs as that shown in our illustration, and used in the same way, was quite common. It is only recently, however, we believe, that the amateur china decorator in America has had the opportunity to employ his skill in this direction.

## ART IN WALL-PAPER.

ENGLISH manufacturers, who for years have purchased Oriental fabrics of all kinds to be reproduced in English textiles, are now engaged in waging bitter warfare, not only against the original goods, but against the designs and colorings embodied in them. London and even provincial journals—notably two as well known for ability as *The Furniture Gazette*, of which Dr. Christopher Dresser is the art editor, and *The Kidderminster Shuttle*, published at the seat of the carpet manufacture, are filled with abuse of what one of the leading producers in England calls "Bulgarian atrocities," and another "Eastern rubbish, fit for mops for blind asylums."

Abler and less interested critics are also breaking lances against what they believe to be prevalent errors. It is not neutral color, claim they, that is needed, in wall-paper for instance, but quite the reverse; what is needed being beautiful color and beautiful form, the purer and more intricate the better; and they challenge Mr. Morris or Mr. Allen, or any other art writer or art upholsterer, to say whether he would object to having Tintoretto's "Paradise" (which hangs in the Council Chamber of the Ducal Palace at Venice) covering one of his own walls, and triumphantly ask, Where would the man of neutral

color be then? A neutral wall, they urge, is like a neutral book or a neutral food—useful when the eye is tired or when the mind is wearied or the body sick, and, so far from being decoration, it is hardly more than the negation of decoration—the confession of inability



PORCELAIN TABLE.

to do any thing else. The fact that the doctrine of neutral color has had it all its own way for the past fifteen years, they assert, is simply because it has been

Now, we all understand, these men are utterly, almost hopelessly, wrong, and are going farther in one direction than the worst of those they criticise ever did in the other; but the point is not that they assert such opinions, but that they obtain any hearing.

It is only within a few years that any London art journal of standing would pause on its soaring way to discuss paper-hangings at all, regarding them under the inflexible rules of South-Kensingtonism as not worthy of any consideration in an art sense, and as partaking of the nature of shams and subterfuges for honest work. Even Dr. Dresser, who since then has done admirable labor in this line, and has designed the best dados made in England, in his treatise on wall-papers begins with an apology and an honest confession that he does not approve of them.

In this country, with our climate, our method of building for the present, and our constant tearing down and replacing structures, their use in dwellings has always been consonant with every dictate of fitness and artistic propriety. In one sense they are a positive blessing. Those who can afford to employ in mural decoration the pencil of a Hunt, a Lafarge, or an Eidlitz are very few, and the work of such men must of necessity adorn the walls of public buildings, while through the use of paper-hangings the most delicate and exquisite designs of the greatest artists can enter into the adornment of a thousand homes.

Nor do I imagine that another prejudice of Dr. Dresser's will meet with, or is entitled to, much more respect. I refer to his opinion of the absurdity of making wall-papers in imitation of textile fabrics. His objections that textile fabrics are intended to be seen in folds on a moving object, while wall decorations are to be looked at fixed on a flat surface, and that at all times the imitation by one material of another is untruthful, and becomes especially absurd when we think that almost every material is capable of producing some good art-effect which no other material can—are neither of them at all applicable to the matter under consideration.

Any intelligent reader who will drop into the Broadway warerooms of C. H. George and see there the superb imitations of tapestries, both from English and French manufactories, will at once understand what I mean. I call them imitations, but the word is a misnomer, since they are no more imitations than Dr. Dresser's conventional representation of a lotos flower is an imitation. They merely suggest tapestry, and the use of such suggestion would probably be conceded by Dr. Dresser himself to be in the highest and broadest sense good art. They do not pretend to be cloth, and could not by any means be mistaken for it; and, moreover, the representation is not illegitimate, since the fabrics it originates in were intended to be seen fixed upon a flat surface and were a decoration for such a surface only.

The same reasoning will apply to the reproduction on paper, by Defossé, of Paris, of pictorial tapestries of Teniers, so made as to cover the wall of a room with a complete picture, and which can be seen at the same establishment. Nor can they be objected to on the ground that, being intended for a flat surface, they should present no relief and as little light and shade as possible—a rule which is as absolute as any governing mural decoration. They do not pretend

to be pictures, but flat representations of what were themselves flat—fabrics woven for the very purpose to which the reproductions are now put.

Still another form of such work is that which suggests stamped leather, of which I saw at George's some



PORCELAIN TABLE-TOP.

connected in people's minds with the reaction from the utterly commonplace ornament of the previous quarter of a century, and because it has been more or less sanctioned by the best designer of conventional ornament of modern times.